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SOME ACCOUNT OF THE SEPT OF THE O'CATHAINS

OF CIANNACHTA GLINNE-GEINHIN.^a

Now the O'Kanes of the County of Londonderry.

THE O'CATHAINS OF CIANNACHTA were a junior branch of the celebrated sept of the Cinel-Eoghain,^b to whose chieftains, the great O'Neills of the North, they owed a certain degree of subjection according to the Brehon law, so long as it continued in force. The Cinel-Eoghain are descended from Niall the Great, or *Niall of the Nine Hostages*, who was monarch of Ireland in the beginning of the fifth century; and who erected, in favour of his son Eoghan (*Owen*) and his posterity, a principality which was afterwards called Tir-Eoghain, (*Tir-Owen*, or Tyrone, i.e. Owen's country,) and which included the present counties of Armagh, Tyrone, and Londonderry, together with the peninsula of Ennishowen (properly *Inis-Eoghain*, i.e. Owen's Island) in the county of Donegal. According to O'Dugan, the family historian of the O'Kellys, who composed in the 14th century a topographical poem which has been translated by Mr. Connellan in the notes to his edition of the *Fóur Masters*, (p. 601,) Cathan, the founder of the O'Cathain sept, was the son of Eoghan, and consequently grandson to Niall of the Nine Hostages.

This high origin of the family seems to be allowed by McFirbis and the other genealogists whose works are accessible; and of these it may be remarked, that not one belonged to the O'Cathain line, or had any interest in magnifying its antiquity; so that their statements must be held to give us the traditionally acknowledged descent of the tribe. We are thus led to ascribe to it an *antiquity far exceeding that of any existing royal family on the continent of Europe*; for there seems no reasonable ground for doubting that the ancestors of King Niall the Great were monarchs of Ireland as early at least as the commencement of the Christian æra; but, owing to the law or custom of Tanistry, it is extremely difficult to make out a lineal pedigree of the chiefs of the sept. The frequent re-distribution of the lands of each tribe among all the families of which it consisted, in compliance with the Brehon law of Gavelkind, renders wills, charters, deeds, and other documents, which are so valuable to a genealogist in other countries, nearly useless in the case of ancient Irish families, before the introduction of the English law; and it is

^aThe English reader must be cautioned against pronouncing these names according to the sounds of the letters in his own language; the principles of the Irish orthoëpy being entirely different. *O'Cathain* is to be sounded as if written *O'Ca-hun*, giving to both of the last two syllables the vowel sound of *a* in *hat*.—(This name

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is at present almost universally written and pronounced O'Kane.)—*Ciannachta* is to be sounded *Ké-nach-ta*, the guttural not being pronounced so harshly as in German.—*Glinne-Geimhin* is to be pronounced *Glin-né-Gio-in*.

^b Pronounce *Kinel-Owen*.

easy to understand that it must be very difficult to disentangle the branches of a family tree, when a man might be, and frequently was, succeeded in his titles, honours and estates, by an uncle, nephew, cousin, or distant kinsman, not merely on the failure of the heirs of his body, but to their exclusion.

In the Irish language there are terms which correspond to the titles of King, (*Rígh*), Lord, (*Tighearna*), and Chief, (*Taoiseach*). By the first of these titles the heads of the O'Cathain sept are occasionally mentioned by Irish authorities; but more frequently they are spoken of in the Annals as *Lords* or *Chiefs*: and this I conceive to be the more correct description. It is beyond question that they were in subjection to the O'Loughlins and the O'Neills, who successively obtained the headship of the Cinel-Eoghain; I find that although both these families at times claimed and enjoyed the dignity of Kings,^c yet they were occasionally satisfied to rank as Princes; and I apprehend that the inferior title will sufficiently express the power of their feudatories, the O'Cathains. But the exact measure of the vassal's subjection it would not be easy to determine. Probably it depended not a little at all times on the power of the superior chief to enforce obedience to his mandates. The O'Cathains seem to have been very frequently engaged on the same side with the princes of Tir-Eoghain in the wars which the latter waged with the other Irish chieftains, and with the Kings of England; at other times the O'Neills and the O'Cathains took opposite sides; of which a remarkable example will be given before closing this paper.

In the poem of O'Dugan, already mentioned, the O'Cathains are thus described:—

“Ten Triochas,^d no mean portion, belonged
To the ten sons of Eoghan of the red weapons
Delightful to behold [were] their possessions,
To them an undisputed inheritance.

“Of the Cinel-Eoghain of mild countenance,
Prince of Ciannachta is O'Cathain;
His forces are ready at every call.
Of the race of Teige, son of Cian of the Cashel,
Is the tribe of abundant wealth and fame,
O'Conor was at first their prince.”

Four Masters, p. 601. *Connellan's Tr.*

Here it would seem to be intimated that the forces of O'Cathain consisted of people not originally of the same line with himself, but descended from *Teige*, son of *Cian* of the Cashel, and that they had formerly been under the sway of the O'Conors. Other authorities concur with O'Dugan in stating that Ciannachta, before it came into the possessions of the O'Cathains, had been held by the sept of O'Conor, (in Irish *Ua Conchobhair*), who traced their descent to *Cian*, son of *Ollioll Olum*,

^c The O'Loughlins were frequently denominated Kings of Aileach, from the name of their royal seat between Lough Swilly and Lough Foyle. The O'Neills often

claimed to be Kings of all Ulster, though their supremacy was seldom peacefully acknowledged.

^d *Triochas*, Districts or Domains.

King of Cashel, (that is of *Munster*,) in the third century : so that this point also may be considered as historically proved.* But it is singular that in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, which preserve so many trifling particulars relating to the Irish chieftains and their territories, there is no express record of the acquisition of this splendid principality by the race of O'Cathain ; and, although I have not access at this moment to the *Annals of Ulster*, I believe the case to be the same with them, and with the other historical works now extant, of native origin. This event, though not noticed under the date of its occurrence, had certainly taken place before A.D. 1138, as in that year the *Four Masters* state that—

"Raghnall son of Imhar Ua Cathain, lord of the Craebh, Ciannachta, and Fir-Li, fell through treachery and guile by the Ui-Eoghain of the valley."—*Donovan's* 4 M. ii. p. 1059.

After this period, as Dr. Reeves states, "the family of the Ua Cathain maintained its superiority till the confiscation of Ulster, while the O'Conors sunk into insignificance ; in which condition they continue to exist to this day in the parish of Dungiven." (*Colton's Visitation*, p. 37, n.) It was from their ancestor *Cian*, however, that Ciannachta received the name which it still retains ; Ciannachta being another form of *Cein Tochta*,—"the race of Cian." The name of McKaig is not of rare occurrence in the same district ; it is probably derived from "Teige the son of Cian of Cashel,"

*I place here the following entries copied from the *Four Masters*, under their respective years, being all that I can find in which mention is made of Ciannachta before it came into the possession of the O'Cathains.

A.D. 568.—"After Eochaidh and Baedan had been two years in the [joint] sovereignty of Ireland, they were slain by Cronan, chief of *Ciannachta Glinne-Geimhin*."

[In a note Dr. O'Donovan states that, in the *Ulster Annals*, this chieftain is called "Cronan Mac Tighernach, (*Cronan the son of Tighernach*,) King of Ciannachta, of Glen Gevin."]

A.D. 676.—"Dungal son of Scannal, chief of the Cruithni, and Ceanfaeladh son of Suibhne, chief of *Ciannachta Glinne-Geimhin*, were burned by Maelduin, son of Maelfithrigh, at Dun Ceithirn."

[Dun Ceithrin is now called the *Giant's Sconce*, in the parish of Dumboe, county of Londonderry.]

A.D. 732.—"Tomaltach, lord of *Ciannachta Glinne-Geimhin* died."

A.D. 881.—"Donnchuan son of Conghalach, lord of *Ciannachta Glinne-Geimhin* died."... "Conang son of Fiann, Tanist of *Ciannachta* was killed by the Leinstermen."

A.D. 925.—"Goach son of Dubhrod, lord of *Ciannachta Glinne-Geimhin* was slain by Muirheartach son of Nial."

A.D. 1014.—"Donnchadh Ua Goach lord of *Ciannachta Glinne-Geimhin* was slain."

A.D. 1022.—"Domhnall, grandson of Murchadh Glunillir lord of the North, (*tighearna an Tuaisceirt, lord of Tuscart*) was slain by the *Ciannachtans of Glinne-Geimhin*."

1023.—"Lochlainn son of Maeleachlainn, lord of Inis-

Eoghain and Magh-Itha, was slain by his own brother Niall, and the *Ciannachta of Glen-Geimhin*."

A.D. 1094.—"Conchobhar Ua Conchobhair," (*Conor O Conor*), "lord of *Ciannachta Glinne-Geimhin*, died after a good life."

A.D. 1095.—"Ua-Conchobhair, lord of *Ciannachta Glinne-Geimhin*," died of a pestilence.

A.D. 1096.—"Conchobhar Ua hAinniraidh," (*Conor O'Henery*), lord of *Ciannachta*, and Ua Cein, lord of Ui Mic-Cairthinn, fell by each other in combat.—[It would appear that the dominion of Ciannachta had now passed from the O'Conors to the O'Henerys.—*Ui Mac Cuirthainn* has given its name to the barony of *Tir-Keerin*.]

A.D. 1100.—"Echri Ua Maelmuire, lord of *Ciannachta* was slain by Ua Conchobhair of *Ciannachta Glinne-Geimhin*," [in a struggle probably made by the ousted sept to regain possession of the territory.]

A.D. 1104.—"Dunchadh Ua Conchobhair, lord of *Ciannachta an Glinne* was killed by his own people."

A.D. 1121.—"Gilla-Easbuig Eoghain Ua hAinniraidh," (this odd looking name is pronounced *Gillespy Owen O'Henery*), lord of *Ciannachta Glinne-Geimhin* was killed by his brothers."

"From the pedigree of "Ui-Conchobhair Ciannachta" preserved in the McFibis genealogical work (p. 669, d. e), we learn that Cennlealadh, Tomaltach, Donnchuan, Conchobhar Ua Conchobhair, and Donnchadh [mentioned in the foregoing extracts], were of that family."

—(*Dr. Reeves, Colton's Vis.* p. 36.)

The next entry in the *Annals* which refers to Ciannachta is that under 1138 ; shewing that Raghnall son of Imhar Ua Cathain, slain in that year, was then the acknowledged lord of the territory.

mentioned by O'Dugan. According to the common rules of Irish Grammar, "the son of Teige" would be written *Mac Thaidhg*, and pronounced M_cKaig.

But, although the Irish Annalists have not thought the transference of the dominion of Ciannachta from the O'Conors to the O'Cathains worthy of a passing notice amidst their monotonous catalogue of devastations, wars, burnings, treasons and assassinations, it was a noble territory, the acquisition of which raised the O'Cathains at once from insignificance to splendour. Before they became lords of Ciannachta there is little or no mention of the sept in the *Annals of the Four Masters*; but in the succeeding years their names are of very frequent occurrence. Few of the entries however, are of such a kind as would interest general readers.

Ciannachta, - including with Ciannachta proper the territories of Tir-Keerin and Creeve, which came with it into the possession of the O'Cathains and are often included in it by the Annalists—was indeed a princely domain; extending from the river Foyle on the west, to the eastern side of the Bann near its mouth; bounded on the north by the sea, and on the south by the mountains of Monterlony, those of Glenshane, and a line stretching thence eastward to the Bann. In these limits are included some of the most fertile lands in the north of Ireland; watered by two navigable rivers, the Foyle and the Bann, and by a multitude of streams of inferior note; possessing a varied surface, with a considerable diversity of soil, fit for almost every description of produce that is suited to a northern climate. In ancient times it abounded in wood; in some places there are yet remains of the natural forest, but undervalued and neglected. At the time of its occupation by the O'Cathains it was well provided with churches, having enjoyed the benefit of the labours of Saint Patrick, Columb-kille, Caindech, Brécan, and other pious missionaries, who had left behind them abundant proofs of their zeal and success in establishing ecclesiastical foundations. The O'Cathains were liberal benefactors to these institutions. The priory of Dungiven, a house of Canons Regular of the Augustinian order, is said by Sampson (*Statistical Account of Londonderry*, p. 489) and Archdall (*Monasticon Hib.* p. 92) to have been founded by the O'Cathains: and although the date assigned (A.D. 1100) is certainly too early, being anterior to their acquisition of the territory, yet the fact is probable in itself, and is supported by the circumstance that the conventual church (which still exists though in ruins) was the burying place of the sept in the days of their greatness, and is still used for the same purpose by their representatives and descendants, though now in humble life. In A.D. 1192 "the doorway of the refectory of Dubh-Regles Columb-kille," (the ancient Abbey Church of Derry) "was made by O'Cathain of Craoibh, and the daughter of O'Henery." (4 *M.*) Many similar entries attest the liberality of this family to the church.

It would be very tedious to extract from the *Annals of the Four Masters* all the historical statements in which the O'Cathains must be included as members of the great confederacy of the Cinel-Eoghain; nor would it serve any useful purpose to copy even the whole of those in which they are

expressly named; the following entries will suffice to give an idea of the state of society and manners in Ireland, before the English invasion in 1170.

A.D. 1156.—“Aedh son of Ruadhri Ua Canannain, lord of Cinel-Conaill,^f was slain by Ua Cathain and Feara-na Craeibhe,” (i.e. the men of *Creve* now comprehended in the barony of Coleraine) “by treachery.”

A.D. 1157. In this year Muirheartach Ua Lachlainn (*Moriarty O'Lochlin*) head of the Cinel-Eoghain, and Ruaidhri Ua Conchobhair (*Rory O'Conor*), King of Connaught, who had long contested with each other the monarchy of Ireland, mutually invaded each others territories. Muirheartach was almost every where victorious and returned home in triumph; but one of the predatory expeditions which he sent out was unsuccessful; “the host was defeated, and many of them slain, together with Ua Cathain of Craeibh.” During the absence of Muirheartach, his rival “Ruaidhri invaded Tir-Eoghain, burned Inis-Eanaigh,” (*Insheny* near Strabane); “cut down its orchard,” (the mention of this fact shows orchards to have been scarce); “and plundered the country as far as Cuaille-Ciannacht.” This last place is now called Coolkenaght, (*the Wood of Kenaght*) in the parish of Faughanvale, and county of Londonderry. Such occurrences meet the reader of the Annals of Ireland with melancholy frequency.

A.D. 1171.—“A plundering fleet was brought by the Ulidians,^g into Tir-Eoghain, in which they carried off a countless number of cows. A predatory excursion was made by Niall son of Mac Lochlainn and the Cinel Eoghain into Ulidia; and numbers were slain by them; and they carried off countless cows. The hostages of the Airghiallia,” (*Oriel*, in the counties of Armagh and Louth) “were afterwards taken by Niall O'Lochlainn. A great predatory force was led by Magnus Mac Duinnleibhe Ua hEochadha [*Mac Donslevy O'Houghy*] “and the Ulidians into Cuil-an-tuaisceirt,” (*Cul-an Tuscart*,—(now the N.E. liberties of Coleraine); “and they plundered Cuil-rathen, (*Coleraine*) and other churches. A small party of the Cinel-Eoghain, under Conchobhar Ua Cathain, overtook them, and a battle was fought between them in which the Ulidians were defeated, with the loss of one-and-twenty chieftains and sons of chieftains, with many others [of the commonality] and Magnus himself was wounded, but he escaped from the conflict on that occasion. He was afterwards killed by his own brother Donnleibhe, and Gilla-Aenghus a son of Mac-Gilla-Epscoip, ruler of Monaigh,”^h [*Moir*] at “Dun,” (or *Downpatrick*.)

This entry refers to the very next year after the landing of Strongbow with his mail-clad warriors in the province of Leinster; and it forms one of many hundred similar records belonging to the same disastrous period in the history of the native Irish princes; who, in their infatuation, continued to overrun, burn, plunder, and waste each others territories—to kill, blind, dethrone, and by every means weaken each other—in the presence of the stern invaders, who only awaited the moment of their common exhaustion, to pounce upon them and subjugate the victors and the vanquished in the unnatural and inglorious strife. A few years after this, the O'Donnleibhe of Uladh was stripped of

^fThe Cinel-Conaill were a sept descended from Conail Gu'ban, a son of Niall of the Nine Hostages. Their territory included the greater part of the county of Donegal, with portions of Sligo and Fermanagh.

^gThe inhabitants of Uladh, or Ulidia; the western part of the county Down, extending from Carlingford

Lough to the neighbourhood of Antrim. Its prince was O'Donslevy, otherwise called O'Heoghy.

^h*Ruler of Monaigh*.—Dr. O'Conor translates this *Gubernatore Momonie*; “Ruler of Munster!” Connellan, “a prior of monks.”—I follow Dr. O'Donovan.

his dominions by the conquering De Courcy; and the O'Cathain of Ciannachta was compelled to defend his territories against a horde of Norman ravagers led by one of De Courcy's companions in arms!

A.D. 1175.—“The Cinel-Eandaⁱ were defeated and a great slaughter made of them by Eachmarcach O'Cathain and Niall O'Gormely.”

A.D. 1178.—“Raghnall son of Eachmarcach O'Cathain, was slain by the Cinel-Moen,” (the O'Gormelys) “in the beginning of the summer.”

A.D. 1181.—“Domhnall son of Aedh Mac Lachlainn, and the Cinel-Eoghain of Tullagh-Oge,” (*the O'Neills*, whose inaugural stone was at that place) “made an incursion into Ulidia, and defeated the Ulidians, the Hy Tuirtre, and the Fir-li,^k together with Rory McDonslevy and Cumigh O'Flynn.—The men of Moy-Ithe^l together with Eachmarcach O'Cathain and the Cinel-Binnigh of the valley, mustered an army and crossed Toome. They plundered all the territories of Hy Tuirtre and Fir-li, and carried off many thousands of cows.”

It is remarkable that the chieftain, whose lands the O'Cathains thus plundered and wasted, had three years before, repulsed with great loss, and some ignominy, the Anglo-Normans who had invaded his limits. According to the Annalists, in 1178, (which was the year following that in which he seized Downpatrick and a considerable portion of Ulidia and Dalaradia,) “John de Courcy proceeded to plunder Dalaradia and Hy Tuirtre; and Cumidhe O'Flynn,^m lord of Hy Tuirtre and Fir-li, gave battle to him and his foreigners, and defeated them with great slaughter, through the miracles of Patrick, Columb-kille, and Brendan: and John [de Courcy] himself escaped with difficulty and fled to Dublin.” (4 *M.*)—Giraldus Cambrensis states that in this engagement De Courcy lost all his knights, (*milites*; not “all his men,” as Dr. O'Donovan renders the passage,) except eleven, with whom he retreated fighting on foot for thirty miles, without tasting food for two days, having lost every thing but their lives, which were only saved by incredible exertions. How the English must have rejoiced to see the gallant O'Flynn attacked and plundered by his own countrymen! The consequences of this ruinous policy were soon apparent; for the very next year the O'Cathains, who had thus beaten down the sept which formed the bulwark of their frontier, were attacked and defeated by the watchful enemy on their own territory!

A.D. 1182.—“Domhnall the son of Aedh O'Lachlainn marched an army to Dunboe in *Craeibh*,ⁿ and then gave battle to the English. The Cinel-Eoghain were defeated: and Raghnall O'Breaislen, Giolla-criosd O'Cathain, and many others were killed. On this occasion they [the English] carried off with them the Gospel of St. Martin.”^o

A.D. 1196.—“Muirchertach son of Muirchertach O'Lachlainn, lord of the Cinel-Eoghain, presumptive heir to the throne of Ireland, tower of the valour and achievements of Leith Chuinn,^p destroyer of the cities and castles of the English, and founder of churches and fair sanctuaries, was killed by Donchadh the son of Blosnadh O'Cathain,^q at

ⁱ The territory inhabited by this tribe was the present barony of Raphoe, in the county of Donegal.

^k These districts lay around the present towns of Toome, Randalstown, and Antrim.

^l *The Plain of It*; a region in which the towns of Strabane and Lifford are now situated.

^m The descendants of this family are now called O'Lynn, or Lynn.

ⁿ The Four Masters say “in Dalrieda,” but this is a mistake: Dalrieda, (now called *the Route*) lay to the east of the Bann, and Dunboe is to the west of it.

^o St. Patrick is said to have been a nephew of St. Martin of Tours: and this book was probably one which he was believed to have brought with him from Gaul. It appears to have been for some time kept in Derry; most probably it is no longer in existence.

^p *Leith Chuinn*, the northern half of Ireland: the southern was in like manner called *Leith Mogha*.

^q “That this *Blosky* is the ancestor of the numerous clan of the *Mac Cluskeys* in the county of Londonderry, can scarcely be doubted.”—O'DONOVAN.

the instigation of the Cinel-Eoghain, who had pledged their loyalty to him before the Three Shrines and the Canon of Patrick. His body was carried to Derry, and there interred with honour and respect."

The next entry is one of great importance in these Memorials of the O'Cathain race: for although their name is not mentioned by the historian, it is evident that, had the expedition of Peyton been successful, they would have been at once stripped of the possessions which they had acquired at the beginning of this century; and of which, up to this time they appear to have made a very unwarrantable use.

A.D. 1197.—"John De Courcy and the English of Ulidia marched with an army to Eas-Craoibhe," (the *Salmon leap*, a cataract on the Bann near Coleraine;) "and erected the castle of Kilsanctan, and wasted and desolated the territory of Ciannachta. He left Rotsel Piton," [*Peyton* ?] "together with a large body of forces in the castle, out of which they proceeded to plunder and ravage the territories and the churches. Rotsel Piton afterwards came on a predatory excursion to the harbour of Derry, and plundered the churches of Cluain-I, Enagh, and Derg-bruach. But Flachbertach Ua Maoildoraídh," (*Flagherty O'Muldory*), "lord of Cinel-Eoghain and Cinel-Conaill, with a small party of the northern Hy-Niall, overtook him, and a battle was fought between them on the strand of Faughauvale, in which the English and the son of Ardgál Mac Lachlainn were slaughtered, through the miracles of St. Columbkille, Caidigh, and Breacan, whose churches they had plundered."

The castle of Kilsanctan built by De Courcy on this occasion, no longer exists; by some ancient authorities it is called *Kilsantail*; and was probably not far from the tumulus now called Mount Sandall, on the eastern bank of the river Bann. The churches which Peyton laid waste are thus identified by Dr. O'Donovan. That of Cluan-I is now a ruin, called erroneously *Collumbkille's Chapel*, in the townland of Cluny, in the bend made by the river Foyle, opposite Derry; it was consecrated to St. Breacan (*Colton's Visitation*, p. 31.) The church of Enagh is still standing in ruins, on the shore of the lough so called, about three miles from Derry. Derg-bruach, or the "*Red Brink*," was close to the last-named church, in a townland now named Gransha, but called in the Inquisition of 1609 "the Grange of Dirgebroe," a designation which preserves both the ancient and the modern name of the place. No vestige of its church now exists. Of the three Saints to whose miraculous interference the Irish ascribed their victory, Caidigh, otherwise called *Canice*, the founder of the Abbey and Church of Kilkenny, was a native of Ciannachta, having been born in the parish of Drumachose, the church of which was also placed under his invocation.

A.D. 1206.—"An army was led by Hugo de Lacy" (to whom the lands and authority of De Courcy had been transferred) "and the English of Meath and Leinster into Tullagh-oge; and burned churches and corn; but obtained neither hostages nor pledges of submission from Hugh O'Neill on this occasion.—The same people led another army into Ciannachta, and burned all the churches in that territory, besides driving off a countless number of cows."

A.D. 1212.—"Fearghall O'Cathain, lord of Ciannachta and Fear-na-Craoibhe, was slain by the English."

A.D. 1213.—"O'Cathain and the men of Craoibh came to Derry to take the house of the son of Mac Lachlainn. The great prior of the Abbey church of Derry, who interposed to make peace between them, was killed. God and

* The *Canon of Patrick* is a very ancient and valuable MS., now called the *Book of Armagh*, which is at present in the possession of the Rev. Dr. Reeves, of Bally-

mena. It is probable that the "*Bell of Patrick's Will*," so ably illustrated by that eminent scholar, was one of the "Three Shrines."

Columb-kille wrought a miracle on this occasion ; for Mahon Magaithne, the person who had gathered and mustered the army, was killed in the doorway of the church of Duibh Regles, in revenge of Columb-kille."

For many years after this date we read of no irruptions by the English warriors into the territory of O'Cathain ; on the contrary, we find that, in A.D. 1260, O'Neill, and O'Connor of Connaught, attacked the English in Downpatrick, their stronghold in the north ; but were themselves defeated, and many of their leaders slain. Among the fallen were O'Neill himself, O'Cathain, and fifteen leading gentlemen of his sept :—Mac Namee, the hereditary bard of the O'Neills, in some verses which have been preserved, mentions the loss of Manus O'Cathain as the greatest sustained on that occasion, next to that of the "King" himself. (O'DONOVAN *in loc.*) For upwards of a century the mention of the O'Cathains in the *Annals* is infrequent and not very interesting. It is worthy of notice, however, that in the long interval of upwards 350 years, which elapsed between the year 1206 and the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the English appear never once to have penetrated into Ciannachta, much less to have made a conquest of the territory. By what means it came to be included in the dominions of the crown of England will hereafter be shown : meantime it is sufficient to remind the reader that *it certainly was not by the right of conquest.*

We may perhaps attribute the comparative security of the Irish princes of this period to their having adopted, from the example of the English, the practice of erecting castles and fortresses for their defence when attacked. Henceforward an invasion was not necessarily a conquest, nor a lost battle the loss of a territory. About this time the northern Irish chieftains began to build castles. O'Donnell had his castles ; O'Neill had his castles ; O'Dogherty had his castles ; and O'Cathain had his castles. Two of them were very remarkable. One was situated on the shore of the beautiful little lake of Annagh or Enagh, already mentioned as the locality of one of the churches burned by Rossell Peyton in the predatory incursion in A.D. 1197 ; its ruined walls are still standing, to the height of four feet from the ground, and show that the place when perfect must have been commodious and picturesque, as well as strong. The other was built on a romantic spot called *Lim-a-vady*, (*Leim-amhadaidh*,—"the Dog's Leap,") near a waterfall of the same name, where the river Roe forms a cataract of no great height but of surpassing beauty. The castle was situated on the salient angle of a precipice nearly one hundred feet high, overhanging the stream ; and, being defended on the land side by a deep ditch, which seems to have been spanned by a draw-bridge, it must have been nearly impregnable before the use of artillery. This castle was inhabited by the O'Cathains till the time of James. I ; and traces of the gardens, fish-pond, &c., are still, or were until very lately, discernible. The castle of Dunseverick, on a precipice overhanging the sea, to the eastward of the Giant's Causeway, was also held by an O'Cathain ; but I believe him not to have been the O'Cathain of Ciannachta and Craoibh.

(To be continued.)